

Summaries and Photos from Past SBDN-Sponsored Bat Blitzes

2002 Bat Blitz – the one that started it all!

In 1998, the Great Smoky Mountains National Park (GSMNP) began all All Taxa Biodiversity Inventory (ATBI). The goal of this 15-year project is to inventory every living thing in the Park, mostly during taxon-specific “bio-blitzes” that allow large numbers of biologists and volunteers to converge on the Park collecting activities. Past blitzes have focused on taxa ranging from ferns to beetles to slime molds. Some ATBI participants noted gaps in data on ecto- and endoparasites from bats, and this led to the organization of the first Bat Blitz in the southeast. From 17-20 June 2002, 26 biologists from nine institutions trapped 205 bats at 12 locations in the Park. Seven bat species were captured, including endangered Indiana bats and a Rafinesque’s big-eared bat. Blitz volunteers collected ectoparasites, feces, blood, tissue and fur; these samples were sent to five different institutions for further study on parasites and genetic analyses. An Indiana bat maternity roost was found as a result of the Blitz. The Blitz also allowed numerous bat biologists to work in teams, sharing ideas and information plus tips on field techniques. The Bat Blitz received media attention and generated several newspaper articles favorable to bats.

2003 SBDN Bat Blitz

Following the success of the Great Smoky Mountain Bat Blitz in 2001, the U.S. Forest Service, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, and the Southeastern Bat Diversity Network sponsored a second Bat Blitz in 2003. Volunteer biologists from state and federal agencies, universities, and private companies from 9 states came together in the Ouachita National Forest of western Arkansas to learn as much as possible about the bat fauna of the area while sharing techniques with each other. From August 4-7, 2003 a total of 209 bats, including 156 red bats (*Lasiurus borealis*), 25 eastern pipistrelles (*Pipistrellus subflavus*), 16 evening bats (*Nycticeius humeralis*), 7 northern long-eared bats (*Myotis septentrionalis*), and 5 big brown bats (*Eptesicus fuscus*) were captured at 22 sites on streams and roads in 4 Ranger Districts. Blood, DNA, feces, and hair samples from captured bats were collected to aid in ongoing research projects. In order to generate positive publicity for bats, one evening was designated as "media night" and representatives from Arkansas' statewide newspaper and 7 television stations from Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Tennessee attended trapping sessions.

2004 SBDN Bat Blitz

The third annual Bat Blitz was held from 1-5 August 2004 in the Uwharrie National Forest and the Pee Dee National Wildlife Refuge in the Piedmont region of North Carolina, an area lacking baseline data of bat distribution and abundance. Forty-seven volunteers came from 11 states, including Michigan, California, New Mexico, and Texas. Eleven experienced bat biologists each led teams of 1-6 volunteers to conduct mist net surveys at over 30 sites in three counties. Each team had standardized kits for collecting

tissue, fecal samples, and echolocation reference calls. Seventy-seven bats representing five species were captured: red bats (*Lasiurus borealis*), evening bats (*Nycticeius humeralis*), Seminole bats (*L. seminolus*), big brown bats (*Eptesicus fuscus*), and eastern pipistrelles (*Pipistrellus subflavus*). We saw evidence and recorded echolocation calls of two other species: Brazilian free-tailed bats (*Tadarida brasiliensis*) and southeastern bats (*Myotis austroriparius*). Data collected at the Blitz were used for local studies of the effects of water quality on foraging behavior of bats in Piedmont watersheds. The Bat Blitz was covered in local and statewide papers and featured as a four minute CNN television piece. Major monetary and logistic sponsors of the event included Land Trust of Central NC, NC State Museum of Natural Sciences, NC State Parks, University of NC-Greensboro, Clemson University, U.S.D.A. Forest Service, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. See CNN [HYPERLINK "http://www.cnn.com/2004/TECH/science/08/12/batblitz/index.html"](http://www.cnn.com/2004/TECH/science/08/12/batblitz/index.html) [article](#) or Independent Weekly [HYPERLINK "http://www.indyweek.com/gyrobase/Content?oid=oid%3A23684"](http://www.indyweek.com/gyrobase/Content?oid=oid%3A23684) [article](#) on the event.

2005 SBDN Bat Blitz

The fourth annual Bat Blitz returned to the Arkansas portion of the Ouachita National Forest July 31 - 4 August and was conducted on portions of the Cold Springs, Fourche and Poteau Ranger Districts located in the west-central portion of the Forest.

Communities located in the vicinity of the event were Danville, Booneville and Waldron. Rogers Scout Camp near the community of Ione served as base of operations to 56 participants from a wide range of institutions and agencies. Sponsors were the U.S. Forest Service, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, and Southeastern Bat Diversity Network.

A total of 393 bats was captured during three evenings of field activity in spite of very dry conditions. Several streams selected as netting sites during event planning turned out to be completely dry and did not contain pools typically associated with them during summer months. Species captured were 218-*Lasiurus borealis*, 95-*Myotis septentrionalis*, 45- *Nycticeius humeralis*, 8- *Lasiurus seminolus*, 7-*Eptesicus fuscus*, 12-*Perimyotis subflavus*, and 8-*Lasiurus cinereus*. A variety of biological samples were taken on selected species for on-going and future studies.

The Blitz received local media attention resulting in an entire page of text and photos favorable to bats. Sincere appreciation is extended to Ouachita National Forest biologists Frances Rothwein, Joe Neal, and Mary Lynn Mentz who served as the primary host committee.

2006 SBDN Bat Blitz

The 2006 SBDN-Blitz was held August 6-10, 2006 in the mountains of northwestern South Carolina and northeastern Georgia. The Blitz was sponsored by the Francis Marion National Forest, the Southern Research Station, the Chattahoochee National Forest, South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, and Georgia Department of Natural Resources. Our home for the Blitz was Camp Chatuga in Mountain Rest, SC. We had 62 volunteers, 5 guests, and 3 members of the media participate in and observe

the activities. Attendees came from 11 states across the South and represented 8 universities, 2 federal agencies, 5 state agencies, 3 private companies, 2 city agencies, 1 zoo, and 2 elementary schools. Mist netting was conducted for 3 nights and 31 sites were surveyed. We captured 261 bats of 10 species: 1 Rafinesque's big-eared bat, 36 big brown bats, 141 red bats, 1 hoary bat, 1 Seminole bat, 5 small-footed bats, 18 little brown bats, 34 northern long-eared bats, 2 evening bats, and 22 eastern pipistrelles. Because Rafinesque's big-eared bats and small-footed bats are species of special concern in South Carolina and Georgia, their captures were of particular note. Further, we obtained only the second record of a Seminole bat on the Andrew Pickens District. Thus, valuable data on the status and distribution of bats of the area were collected. We also hosted a "Kids Night at the Blitz". Several children ranging from 3-12 years attended. Although we did not catch any bats that evening, the children were able to observe free flying bats and hear them with the bat detectors.